

“It revealed the fact that Massachusetts and Rhode Island were doing very nearly all the business.”

After the 1st of January, 1808, the slave trade having become everywhere illegal, custom house records ceased to furnish the information we desire, and inquiry must be turned in other directions. You will readily comprehend how happy I was to obtain possession of the book I hold in my hand. It is the first volume of the life of Judge Joseph Story, by his son, W. W. Story, the late celebrated sculptor, I believe. It contains utterances from the Judge himself, when seated on the benches of his own circuit, which, of course, will be accepted as absolutely truthful all over the civilized world; for the reputation of the great man was indeed world-wide. I read first from pages 335, 336, the language of the son: “It was at this time my father’s attention became directed to the slave trade. In the course of his circuits he had learned that, although prohibited alike by law and by humanity, it was still carried on to a considerable extent in the various seaports of the New England States; and that the fortunes of many men of prominence were secretly invested in its infamous traffic. The conscience of the North was then less sensitive upon this subject than it is now. Slavery itself had hardly disappeared in New England, and the slave trade was winked at. A man might still have a position in society and claim consideration as a gentleman, nay, as a Christian, while his ships were freighted with human cargoes, and his commerce was in the blood and pain of his fellow creatures. The practice was publicly and abstractly inveighed against; but was secretly and practically indulged in. The chances of great fortunes in that trade inflamed the cupidity and deadened the consciences of men among the States of my father’s circuit. This was especially the case in Rhode Island, which, lying furthest south, where slavery, ‘like: